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Lucia A Keegan 09/18/2006 10:24:21 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 06211

SIPDIS  
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ACTION: ECON  
INFO: DCM ECNO UNESCO ECSO SCI ENGO SCIO TRDO ESCI  
FCS POL ORA AMB AGR LABO

DISSEMINATION: ECONOUT /1  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: EMIN:TWHITE  
DRAFTED: ECON:HSULLIVAN  
CLEARED: DCM:KHOFMANN (SUBS), ECON:SDWYER

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OO RUEHC RUEHKO RUCNMEM RUCNIRA RUEHBJ RUEHIL  
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1371  
INFO RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2342  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES  
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1315  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0639  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0225  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 5614  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1010  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 1405  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0537

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/ESC, EUR/WE, EUR/ERA, NEA/NGA AND EAP/J

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2016  
TAGS: [ETTC](#) [EINV](#) [EPET](#) [FR](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAN AND LIBYA SANCTIONS ACT (ILSA): FRANCE ON  
TOTAL'S REPORTED INTEREST IN AZADEGAN PROJECT

REF: STATE 148000

Classified By: Economic Minister-Counselor Thomas White for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

1.(C) On September 13, as part of U/S Levey,s conversations with President Chirac,s diplomatic advisor Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, Charge raised the recent TOTAL press statements, saying they had been unfavorably noted in Washington and were seen as unwelcome &business as usual signals at a time when the international community and in particular France and the US were working to maintain pressure on Tehran. MGM acknowledged the points. ECMIN made the same points on September 12 to Alain Demarolle, economic advisor to Prime Minister Villepin. Demarolle did not comment substantively, but noted that he understood the sensitivity and &bad timing of the press statements.

12. (SBU) On September 14, EconCounselor met with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Energy, Transport, and Infrastructure Deputy Director Nicole Taillefer (DAS-equivalent) to convey reftel points. EconCouns underlined that the timing of the investment was particularly unfortunate since it would suggest "business as usual" despite Iran's failure to comply by August 31 with UN Security Council Resolution 1696.

¶3. (SBU) Taillefer responded that the MFA had a regular dialogue with French energy firms, including TOTAL, and would "sensitize" TOTAL to Iranian developments. However, TOTAL was a private firm and neither the EU nor France had legal restrictions in investing in Iran's energy sector. Taillefer cited Total CEO Thierry Desmarest's comments to the press on September 8 in which he said that TOTAL would respect decisions made by the French government and the European Union, but that TOTAL's Iranian business was not subject to U.S. law. Taillefer said that she would share our points with GOF counterparts and would inform us of any evolution in the French position.

¶4. (U) Embassy will discuss Azadegan with senior TOTAL officials on September 19.  
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